**Compare the usefulness of Sources A and B as evidence for the reasons why the Japanese People accepted US imposed democracy**

The key feature of both these sources is the idea that the Japanese people accepted the US democracy because they had a genuine desire to do so, as they saw it as a system that would bring about positive changes in Japan, changes which would benefit the people and give them freedom and the benefits of American culture.

Source A has a lot of good things to say about the American democracy, describing it as a “progressive” constitution that will be readily embraced by the Japanese people, while Source B refers to the fact that American imposed democracy will liberate the people and bring about increased rights and freedoms for the ordinary people. Both sources list the positive outcomes of, and therefore the reasons why the people would accept, American Style democracy: They both speak of freedom, both literal and political (in the sense that they can express ideas as they wish), and a desire to create a Japan which is forward thinking and beneficial to its people.

There is however a key difference in how these two sources present these reasons. Source A states that the reasons the Japanese people are accepting democracy is due to the benefits that the people will receive, such as American culture, stabilisation of the Japanese political system (shown by the ending of the debates on the Emperor system, and the rejection of Communism), and overall improvements to the way of life in Japan following the Second World War. Source B, however, has a slightly different approach, stating as it does what the May Day committee *would like to see* in a Japanese democracy: popular government, conditions which benefit the people, and international recognition. There is therefore in the content of these sources slightly different approaches to the same reason why the Japanese accepted US imposed democracy: So that the people will reap the benefits, and in the hope that the people will reap the benefits respectively. Both, however, offer the same overall reason, that the Japanese accepted US democracy because of the benefits such an acceptance would bring to Japan.

I know from my own knowledge that the content of both of these sources is largely true. Japan did embrace American culture, and follow American style ideas as opposed to Soviet, as Source A states, as shown by the adoption in Japan in particular of American fashions, films, and social and sexual attitudes. Likewise, as source B discusses, there was a dissolution of despotic rule, as shown by the limitation of the Emperors role to a purely symbolic one, and there were political and social conditions which were beneficial to the people, such as rights for women, religious freedom (in the toleration of Christianity), and the acceptance of all political parties, including the Communist party. This suggests that both these sources can be considered useful as evidence, as discussed below.

Both sources are from a similar time, and this is crucial to our understanding of them. Although the Japanese constitution did not come into effect until 1947, it was announced in November 1946, just months after these two sources were written. There were therefore being written at a time when the new constitution was being drafted. This was a crucial time for Japan, shortly after the end of the Second World War, and still within “Stage One” of the American reconstruction programme (punish and reform). This timing does therefore affect how reliable these sources could be. Source A is written by an anonymous Japanese citizen, and there are implications in this source of the idea of worshipping authority figures prevalent in Japanese culture at this time. The Emperor had been worshipped as a God in Japan, and in many ways MacArthur simply supplanted this role for the Japanese people, shown in this source by terms such as “Your Excellency.” That this is so soon after the Japanese defeat makes such an occurrence perhaps unsurprising, but it says much for the usefulness of this source as evidence for the reasons why the Japanese people accepted US democracy: In a culture accustomed to worshipping authority figures, a source which says only positive things about the imposed ideas must be treated with some suspicion, and is therefore less useful as evidence.

The timing casts a slightly different problem on Source B’s usefulness as evidence, given the origin of this source. The author of Source B is the May Day Committee, a left wing organisation within Japan, and the source outlines what they hope will come about under the new US imposed democracy. As a left wing organisation, they would be expected to have some concerns under a US system, given the already apparent American distrust of left wing organisations (and Communism in particular) coming about as a result of the emerging cold war tensions in post-war Europe. This source is therefore outlining reasons why Japan was going to accept US democracy that cannot necessarily be trusted, given that the May Day Committee have a vested interest in expressing their hopes that the imposed democracy would be truly representative government (ie include left wing elements). However, that it states the hopes of the people (above) does, I believe, say a great deal about this sources usefulness as evidence for the reasons Japanese people accepted US imposed democracy. From my own knowledge, I know that the Japanese People, thanks to generations of Imperial rule, struggled to understand democracy, and saw it simply to mean freedom. The reasons that Source B states can therefore be argued to be accurate, in that they show what the people were hoping for from the US imposed democratic constitution ie freedom and liberty for the people, by the people, that would promote their freedom and livelihood.

Both sources therefore offer similar reasons as to why the Japanese people accepted US imposed democracy, centred on the idea that the chief reason was the benefits that US imposed democracy would bring to Japan. Both sources are however limited in their usefulness as evidence for these reasons, as both have key omissions. Perhaps the key reason for the acceptance of US democracy that is not mentioned is one of the most obvious, that Japan was effectively under US military occupation, and actually had no choice in the matter. Japan needed the protection of the US nuclear shield, as it was in no position to defend itself given the total collapse of its economy and armed forces following the Second World War. In addition, US armed forces were stationed in Japan, which would clearly be a reason for the Japanese people to accept democracy, given that there was nothing they could do to stop its imposition. Source A does at least make passing reference to this idea, in the mention of American Military sacrifice.

Overall, I believe that Source B is more useful to us as evidence for the reasons why Japan accepted US imposed democracy. While both sources cover similar ideas, and have the same key omissions, Source B can be considered more useful by the merit of the fact that it outlines clearly what the people hoped to achieve under the new constitution, namely, popular government, beneficial social conditions, and so on. It also contains reasons that I know from my own knowledge to have been important to the Japanese people, such as freedom and an end to despotic rule. While source A does mentions these ideas, it has a different focus, leaning more towards cultural ideas than political. The usefulness of Source A also suffers from the fact that it is clearly affected by the worship culture of MacArthur, and we could therefore infer that the reasons it outlines as to why the Japanese accepted US democracy would be affected by this, and part of the reason included in this source is that they accepted because they were used to following the orders of their leaders without question, and in this case MacArthur has simply supplanted the Emperor. That is not to say that there is not a case to be made that this worship mentality was not a reason why the Japanese accepted US democracy, rather I am arguing that the reasons outlined in Source B are more representative of the views of the Japanese people at the time, based on my own knowledge. I would therefore conclude that, while both sources offer convincing reasons as to why the Japanese people accepted US democracy, and both omit negative details, such as the American military control, Source B is more useful as evidence, as it seems to me to detail more widely held views, and I have argued from my own knowledge that these views are representative of those held at the time. While this can also be argued for Source A, the reasons in the latter are weaker, and less widely held than those in Source B.